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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, help our lawmakers to honor Your Name. Demonstrate Your great power by filling them with Your Spirit and giving them a desire to cultivate spiritual discernment.

Lord, sustain them through the power of Your prevailing providence until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. As our Senators draw near to You, experiencing Your divine guidance, may they be motivated to follow Your precepts as they face difficult decisions.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 26, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a

Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. HIRONO thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Todd Sunhwae Kim, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

NOMINATION OF TODD SUNHWAE KIM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this week, the Senate will consider the nomination of Todd Kim to be Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division, known as ENRD. This Division acts as our Nation's environmental law firm. It leads efforts to reduce pollution and protect our Nation's precious national resources by enforcing Federal, civil, and criminal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and hazardous waste laws. At least that is what it is designed to do.

Under the previous President, Donald Trump, ENRD took some troubling steps in the wrong direction. It prioritized protecting polluters over the environment.

With more than 1½ million acres of the United States currently burning in a wildfire season that has been greatly exacerbated by climate change, we are mindful of the critical importance of vigorous enforcement of our Nation's environmental laws.

What the Division needs now is a leader who will bring back integrity, expertise, and a renewed commitment to enforcing our Nation's environmental and natural resources law. Mr. Kim is that leader. In fact, his career in environmental law began at ENRD, where he worked as a trial attorney. During his time with the Division, he was awarded the Justice Department's Outstanding Performance Award on three separate occasions. As a trial lawyer there, he spent 8 years representing the United States zealously and apolitically under both the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Mr. Kim's principled leadership in that role has earned him praise across the ideological spectrum. He has the strong support of former ENRD officials from both parties. Over 80 environmental law experts and academics, who often don't agree on many things, all believe he is the right person. They wrote: "ENRD deserves one of the nation's best lawyers at its helm. Todd Kim promises to be just such a leader."

Mr. Kim also has experience leading a large legal department. He served as the District of Columbia's first solicitor general, a role he held for over a decade.

Additionally, Mr. Kim has received support from Asian-American organizations, including Asian Americans Advancing Justice and the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

His nomination received strong, bipartisan support on our committee. Four of my Republican colleagues—

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Senators GRASSLEY, GRAHAM, CORNYN, and TILLIS—joined the Democratic members in advancing his nomination.

With Mr. Kim leading the ENRD, the American people can trust our Nation's public lands and natural resources will be protected by a proven expert and an accomplished lawyer. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of his nomination.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, now for years, Republicans and Democrats have spoken about the need to invest more in our Nation's infrastructure. We are a country the size of a continent. Every State has critical infrastructure demands, bridges that need repair, railways that need maintenance, sewer systems that desperately need expansion and renovation.

Over a month ago now, a bipartisan group of Senators announced a deal with the White House on a framework for a bipartisan infrastructure bill—a breakthrough moment. Ever since, I have committed both publicly and privately to put that bill on the Senate floor.

Unfortunately, last week, our Republican colleagues prevented the Senate from taking a procedural step to begin the debate. But I want to be very clear. I am fully committed to passing a bipartisan infrastructure bill.

As majority leader, I have the ability to move to reconsider the vote to begin debate on that bill this week. Since Senators are still finalizing the text of the agreement, Senators should be on notice that the Senate may stay in session through the weekend in order to finish the bill.

Let me say that again. Senators should be on notice that the Senate may stay in session through the weekend in order to finish the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

As I have said before, further delays may mean that the Senate will remain in session into the previously scheduled August recess.

We have reached a critical moment. The bipartisan group of Senators has had nearly 5 weeks of negotiations since they first announced an agreement with President Biden. It is time for everyone to get to "yes" and produce an outcome for the American people.

I understand that bipartisan achievements are difficult in our polarized times. Extreme partisans are always rooting for failure. Look no further than the former President.

Just this morning, former President Trump released a statement urging Republicans to retreat from all bipartisan negotiations on infrastructure until after the midterm elections in 2022, maybe longer. Again, the former President said this morning that Republicans are "weak fools and losers"—his words—for even talking to Democrats

and suggested that the Republicans should not negotiate at all unless they are in the majority. FOX News personalities, following his lead, are now encouraging primaries for Republican Senators who support a bipartisan infrastructure deal.

Look, there are always going to be radical voices on the far right who brook no compromise, but that is only a recipe for obstruction and gridlock. We have the opportunity right now to actually accomplish something good for the American people.

Will our Republican colleagues follow the absurd demands of the disgraced former President and his media allies, or will they get a good, bipartisan deal over the finish line? Republican Senators must ignore former President Trump if we are ever going to make progress with the American people. He is rooting for our entire political system to fail. I and the rest of my Democratic colleagues are rooting for a deal.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, now on nominations, the Senate will not remain idle in the meantime. This week, we will consider several highly qualified nominees to the Biden administration. Tonight, the Senate will invoke cloture on Todd Kim—someone the Senator from Illinois has just spoken about—to serve as the Assistant Attorney General and the head of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Justice Department, where he worked as a lawyer for nearly 8 years.

The son of Korean immigrants, Mr. Kim fell in love with America's natural treasures at a young age, when his parents took him on an RV trip across the American West. After tonight, he will be in a position to defend those very treasures by making sure our environmental laws are enforced, our Federal lands are maintained, and our relationship with Native Tribes is respected.

I look forward to confirming his nomination.

Senators should also be aware there may be additional votes on nominations this week, including members of the National Labor Relations Board and potentially votes to advance nominees from our Senate committees.

The Senate has a constitutional duty to advise and consent on Presidential appointments. We will continue that important work this week.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to back up what the majority leader said. The day was May 22, 2019. I remember it well. Two things happened that morning. First was the birth of my granddaughter, which was an exciting and happy event. The second was just the opposite. It was a meeting in

the White House with President Donald Trump, and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss infrastructure.

You see, we had an earlier meeting. Democrats met with the leaders of the Trump administration to discuss an infrastructure bill. When we suggested \$1.5 trillion be spent on infrastructure. President Trump said: No, make it \$2 trillion.

Well, we were happy to hear that. Then when we suggested that President Trump's earlier suggestion of 80 percent of it being paid on a State and local basis rather than Federal, he reversed himself. He said it will be 80 percent Federal. More good news.

Then came the suggestion: Well, it shouldn't just be horizontal infrastructure. It ought to be vertical infrastructure—broadband, school buildings, things that we desperately need in America.

And he said: Include them; let's make that part of the package.

It was one of the best meetings.

Then came the subject of how we were going to pay for it, and President Donald Trump said: Stop. I am not going to get into that conversation.

Well, we said: Mr. President, we have agreed on what we are going to do, but we have to pay for it.

He said: No, you are not going to trap me with raising taxes or doing things that are politically unpopular.

So we postponed this follow-up meeting to this May 22 date—May 22, 2019. We were anxious to get it done because, during his Presidency, there had been no infrastructure programs—none, nothing—despite his promises to the contrary during the campaign.

We came back May 22. He walked in the room and he said to all of us assembled there: As long as you are investigating me for any reason, there will be no infrastructure bill.

He wheeled around and walked out. That was the end of the conversation about infrastructure in the Trump administration. It was never seriously considered or debated after that.

Now we are engaged in a new exercise. Some Republican Senators—and I thank them for their courage and initiative—want to sit down with Democrats and see if we can finally, after years and years, come up with an infrastructure bill to rebuild America.

They are under pressure. They are under pressure from Senator MCCONNELL. He didn't want them to engage in this kind of bipartisan negotiation. And now, today, former President Trump has joined the chorus, saying they shouldn't bargain at all with Democrats. Put it off another year, 2 years, whatever it has to be, until the Republicans control the whole process. That is a recipe for achieving little or nothing. We know that.

So I sincerely hope that this week will be a breakthrough week. Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic majority leader, tried to get it started last week with a simple procedural vote that would move us to this conversation,

but he was unlucky and was unable to get that done, but he has maintained the procedural option of reconsidering that vote. I certainly hope that will happen soon.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on a separate issue, we are at a pivotal moment in the fight against COVID-19. Thanks to the leadership of this administration, our Nation has had one of the most successful vaccination efforts in the world: 340 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the United States, 80 percent of Americans over the age of 65 have been fully vaccinated—80 percent. That means the vast majority of our senior population is protected from being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19.

Yet, at this moment, there is trouble on the horizon. Case numbers across the country are ticking back up. It is important to note why. The Delta variant is spreading like wildfire among unvaccinated people. I have heard quotes from some that it is a thousand times more transmissible than the original COVID-19. And it has quickly become the dominant strain of this virus in America.

There is good news. The vaccines that we all have access to right now will stop the Delta variant in its tracks. They will save your life. With the spread of the Delta variant, the reality for Americans is quickly becoming: Get vaccinated or risk contracting a serious or deadly case of COVID-19.

As Dr. Walensky, the Director of the CDC, said last week—and I quote her—“this is quickly becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated.”

Over the past week, we have started to see a renewed sense of urgency from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They finally—finally—become more vocal about dispelling disinformation about the vaccines. Even FOX News has begun airing public service announcements and encouraging viewers to get vaccinated against the coronavirus. I applaud them for starting to join the chorus of scientific experts, health officials, and community leaders who have been calling on Americans to protect themselves and their loved ones, because it was only a few weeks ago when a couple prime-time hosts on FOX expressed their displeasure with me personally.

I was alarmed, and said so on the floor of the Senate, by some of the ideas that Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham were pedaling. Their anti-vax rhetoric, quite simply, put their viewers and the families of their viewers at risk. We can disagree on political issues, and I am sure we will continue to do so, but we shouldn't play political games with life and death when it comes to COVID-19 vaccines.

We have seen a shift in tone recently. Some hosts on FOX, specifically Sean Hannity and Steve Doocy, now encourage their viewers to get vaccinated. At the very least, they call on them to consult with their doctors. It is a move

in the right direction, but we ought to make it clear once and for all publicly, where we can, that those who are spreading this anti-vax rhetoric are literally risking the lives of our fellow Americans.

We are seeing the good that comes from sharing the facts about vaccines and potential to save lives. As of yesterday, the 7-day average of newly vaccinated Americans is up nearly over one-third from last year week. Nearly 7 in 10 American adults have one dose of COVID vaccine. We need to keep it up.

More than 610,000 of our family members and friends and neighbors in America have died from this disease—and millions more around the world. We have the power within our hands, with vaccines, to stop this pandemic. We all have to do our part.

I want to take an opportunity to recognize something else. Disinformation is not the only reason why people are not getting vaccinated. Sadly, there is a long history of racial bias in our Nation's institutions, from education to housing, to healthcare. That history of racial bias has, understandably, led some Americans to question our institutions based on fear.

Let me first say this: Trust has to be earned.

We have a lot of work to do as a nation to address racial inequities in our healthcare system, like the fact that Black women are three times more likely than White women to die from pregnancy-related complications. Acknowledging these inequities, doing something about them, is how we can build and regain trust. That is the work we have to do.

President Biden's American Rescue Plan was an important investment in tackling health disparities. It increased funding for community outreach, expanded support for community health centers. It provided a \$1 billion investment in the National Health Service Corps to help recruit more doctors, nurses, and other health professionals from communities of color. That was a provision that I added to the bill.

At this moment, if you are still unvaccinated against COVID-19 and you have questions, reach out to a medical professional that you trust. Talk with your doctor, ask them whatever questions you wish, but make sure you have the facts on your side, because the sad truth is the pandemic has deepened the existing racial disparities in America.

Last year, there was nearly a 3-year drop in life expectancy among Black and Brown Americans—3 years. Communities of color have been three times more likely to be hospitalized, twice as likely to die from COVID. We can end this cycle of sickness and despair, but we have got to stop the spread of the new variants. So please consult a medical professional and ask about getting vaccinated.

RANSOMWARE

Madam President, on another issue, a committee we both serve on, the Sen-

ate Judiciary Committee, is going to have an important hearing tomorrow on the issue of ransomware.

For those who may be unfamiliar, ransomware is a type of malicious software that can infect a computer. If hackers attack your computer system with it, they can lock up all the data in your system and demand a ransom payment in exchange for unlocking the data. As a product of our digital age, ransomware is a relatively new threat, but it could impact any individual, business, or organization.

Many Americans had a rude awakening about this threat earlier this year, when a cyber crime syndicate used ransomware to shut down the largest petroleum pipeline in the United States: the Colonial Pipeline. That shutdown sparked a nationwide panic that had people lining up at gas stations for hours, and it put the threat of ransomware into plain view for all Americans. Perhaps someone you know has had their world turned upside down by a ransomware attack. Tomorrow, we will discuss it at length.

GUN VIOLENCE

Madam President, we begin this week with yet another devastating toll of weekend gun violence across America, including the city of Chicago. More than 70 people were shot this past weekend in Chicago. Ten died. If you remember 2 weeks ago, Fourth of July weekend, over 100 people were victims of gunshots in Chicago. In that case, 19 of them died.

It is a mass killing on a regular basis in that great city. Much of it is concentrated in sections of the city, but it is starting to spread because it is so darned easy for a person to get their hands on a gun in that city.

Shootings in Chicago have surged during the COVID pandemic. We see it happening across America. The Biden administration is taking steps in the right direction to stop this gun violence: Cracking down on untraceable ghost guns, rogue gun dealers, and these braces, this equipment that can effectively turn pistols into short-barreled rifles.

Crucially, the Department of Justice announced the launch of five firearm trafficking strike forces. Chicago is one of the cities. New York; San Francisco; Washington, DC; and Los Angeles, are the others.

These strike forces will confront what I believe to be one of the most important causes of this gun violence: the illicit trafficking of guns. These strike forces will also provide support for law enforcement who are on the frontlines of fighting gun violence.

As a testament to that fact, last week, Attorney General Garland joined me in Chicago to highlight how the Justice Department is standing with our police officers and first responders. I am grateful that Attorney General Garland returned to his hometown of Chicago for this purpose. But sadly, it was a somber homecoming.

We first met with police officers and the mayor of Chicago, Lori Lightfoot,

at the Harrison District police station. It is basically ground zero for gun violence in the city of Chicago. They demonstrated to us the brandnew technology, the amazing technology, the video cameras, the shotspotters, new technology which they are using every single day to thwart the criminals and to prove their cases when necessary. These communities and these officers are keeping us as safe as they can, but they are up against an avalanche of guns.

The grim toll of gun violence in Chicago continues to climb upward. The officers agreed with Attorney General Garland and myself, a major problem is that we have guns being illegally sold to people who never should have had them, who never would have passed a background check, convicted felons or those who are mentally unstable. This issue is more important and more significant than any single jurisdiction. It is nationwide.

Roughly, 60 percent of the guns recovered at crime scenes in Chicago originate from out of State, primarily from Indiana, but also from other States. A person can easily buy a gun from an unlicensed seller in Indiana and drive it to Chicago in a matter of minutes that very same day to resell that gun on the streets.

Why don't we do something about this? If those who own guns agree with everyone else that we ought to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people, why can't this Congress do that simple thing to try to slow down this gun violence?

There is one more truth we must acknowledge: Gun violence isn't just about access to weapons. Too many kids in cities like Chicago face daily trauma that is making them more likely to fall into the cycle of violence.

During the Attorney General's visit to Chicago, we joined community leaders at St. Agatha Catholic Church in the Lawndale section of the city. They have developed a successful violence intervention program called READI Chicago. It is one of the many community violence intervention programs that has received financial support from this President.

While meeting with the leaders of READI Chicago, I spoke with a young man whom I will call John. He is remarkably brave. After learning his story, one cannot ignore the similarities he shares with so many other young people in the city.

He grew up in a struggling family. He sold drugs to earn money. Like many of his peers, he ended up carrying a gun and got involved with gang violence. He was arrested, convicted, and served time in prison. Then he came back to the community and wanted to start a different life. That is how he got involved with READI Chicago, where he is now a positive force for change in his home city.

It is an inspiring story, but that young man John, in his early twenties, still remains at risk. He fears that his

advocacy on behalf of this program has put crosshairs on his back in the neighborhood and that his family may even be targeted as well. Every street corner in his neighborhood, every street he crosses, comes with a risk. He has to look around constantly to see if the gang members are going to target him. But still, even under this unimaginable stress, John is looking for a new path in his life. I asked him what he wanted to do. He said he would like to apply to attend Chicago State University, which is near this area. I hope he can get there. And I hope he will be a success, but it is amazing that he still has that dream after all that he has seen.

For young people in Chicago like him, there is no quick fix. If you grew up in a family without stability and security at home, in school, or in a neighborhood, which many of us take for granted every day, it can harm your development and change the way you see the world. The CDC's landmark study on ACEs, adverse childhood experiences, tells us that exposure to trauma is linked to risk of drug use, suicide, academic struggle, and many other problems. If you are a young child experiencing this chaos, if you watch a family member get shot or violently assaulted, it leaves a scar called trauma. Trauma can stay with a child for life.

That is why violence intervention programs like READI Chicago are so important, connecting these at-risk youth with cognitive behavioral therapy, paid transitional jobs, wraparound support services, resources that support the healthy development of children who are struggling with trauma. These are the resources that will change a young person's life and set him on a better path, a path where he can discover a passionate calling and, ultimately, get back to the community.

We must invest in these long-term solutions to break cycles of violence and trauma. The bipartisan RISE from Trauma Act that I have introduced with Senator CAPITO, a Republican from West Virginia, and many colleagues, is an important step in that direction. It would provide \$5 billion that President Biden has called for in his Build Back Better agenda for community violence intervention.

We in the Senate need to take immediate steps to combat violent crime. Can't we just get together and agree that we don't want to sell firearms to people who are convicted felons? It seems so obvious, and there is such public support for it. I want my colleagues to understand that the problem of gun violence isn't confined to the city of Chicago. We have cities that are much smaller downstate that are seeing an increase in gun violence as well. It is time for us to do something about it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

MIKE ENZI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this weekend, we received the bad news that our friend and former colleague, Mike Enzi, was involved in a serious accident while riding his bicycle.

Mike's colleagues on both sides of the aisle were sorry enough to see him depart the Chamber and begin his well-earned next chapter just a few months ago. Mike and Diana were a fantastic Senate couple in every respect, from major legislative accomplishments to the generosity and kindness they showed to everyone from Senate staff to the pages. So I know Members on both sides of the aisle are very much thinking of Mike at this time. We pray for his health and for the entire Enzi family.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

Now, Madam President, on an entirely different matter, American families are anxious, and they are uneasy.

The share of Americans who feels optimistic about our country's direction has plummeted by almost 20 percent just since the springtime. As recently as early May, nearly two-thirds of Americans said they were optimistic about the direction of the country. That was the highest figure that survey had reported in 14 years, but, alas, that has plummeted. Late last week, a new survey found that optimism is now a minority position as 55 percent of Americans are pessimistic. Approval of the new administration's handling of COVID-19 has tumbled. Their handling of the economy is underwater among Independents. Fewer than 4 in 10 Americans approve of their handling of immigration, the border, or violent crime.

Unfortunately, American families have ample reason to feel this way. The end of June clocked the highest annual inflation spike in more than a decade. The Democrats' stay-home bonus to workers who remain unemployed has slowed the recovery and helped to keep workforce participation stagnant. Meanwhile, last year, as the far left put the squeeze on law enforcement funding in cities across the country, America faced a 25-percent—25-percent—increase in homicides. Then, after the Biden administration was very eager to claim ownership and spike the football on the vaccination trajectory, which they largely inherited from Republican leadership, we have now seen vaccination rates in many places plateau on what this White House has been insisting is their watch.

This turn toward pessimism is especially stunning and especially sad because President Biden took office with

the wind at his back. Things were set up for a roaring success like no other Presidential transition in recent memory. Thanks, in large part, to Operation Warp Speed, set up by the prior Congress and administration, we had multiple safe and effective vaccines that were beginning to circulate widely through the country. The new administration's so-called ambitious goal of about a million vaccines per day was already happening before they were sworn in. Thanks to the five bipartisan rescue packages that the Republican-led Senate passed last year, we were primed and ready for a historic economic comeback. Americans were excited and ready to build a comeback summer for the history books.

Yet those incredible tailwinds have largely been squandered. That historic head start has been wasted through bad policy and, in many cases, needlessly divisive leadership.

After a poorly targeted partisan spending package that even liberal economists warned could cause more inflation, American families are now feeling the pain and literally paying the price. After campaign rhetoric and then policy decisions that have made our southern border less secure, a predictable crisis is playing out. After a year of anti-police and anti-rule-of-law rhetoric from too many on the political left, a violent crime surge is hammering communities and making streets less safe all across our country. Oh, and as the new administration pulls back America's presence in the Middle East in a reckless and rushed fashion, terrorist leaders are simply jumping for joy.

This is how you take a country from near-record optimism to serious pessimism in just 2-months' time. This is how you inherit favorable trends in just about every direction imaginable but produce disappointment. Our Democratic friends' big master plan is yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree but even larger. The Washington Democrats' big idea is to borrow, print, and spend our way to even more inflation and even higher costs for American families, along with a historic set of big tax hikes to boot.

My friends across the aisle and down Pennsylvania Avenue should be less concerned about checking leftwing items off activists' wish lists. As more and more of the Democrats' partisan agenda comes online, the American people's pessimism grows and grows. The families of our country need a better approach.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, you know, there is an old saying that I have used quite often, but it bears repeating: Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.

It is a simple yet insightful concept. Human beings often like things to be easy. It is just in our nature. But the reward for easy is very short-lived. Sometimes, if you don't earn it, you don't understand it. If we work hard and challenge ourselves to improve, we reap the benefits for much longer. That is the American way.

I would tell this to my players over the years that I coached. You know, lessons learned that are applied to the football field also apply in life. You know, this country owes you one thing: an opportunity. Sometimes people just need to be shown where that opportunity is at and encouraged to take it, and that is what everyone in this body should be focused on doing: opening doors for opportunity for the people of this country.

President Biden seems determined to close those doors of opportunity by creating, it looks like, a future massive entitlement state.

My Republican colleagues and I have talked a lot about the reckless tax-and-spend plan and the cost of that plan on American families. We are seeing rising inflation, which means dollars from your paycheck are not going as far. We are seeing costs rise on everyday goods that families need: food, gas, diapers—you name it; it is going up. This is a direct result of untargeted spending this year as we are trying to recover from a pandemic, which is the worst time in the world to be throwing government money at a pandemic.

And, now, our Democratic colleagues, it looks like, want to spend \$3.5 trillion more, after spending \$1.9 trillion back in February. And what gets talked about less than the cost of this spending is the social and societal cost of all of these new and expanded programs. While it may not be easy to see or measure, it is no less important, and that is what I want to talk about today.

Let's remember how this started and how we got here. It started with President Biden's announcing two plans—great names. First was the American Families Plan, and then there was the American Jobs Plan. Despite their confusing and similar names, on the face they don't sound that bad. I am for American families, and I am for American jobs.

These plans are not about American families or American jobs. They are full of progressive items that can only pass the Senate through a reconciliation process. There won't be any—there won't be any—Republicans that will vote for this, and Democrats know this. So, now, here we are with our colleagues stuffing the worst parts of President Biden's agenda—I am talking about the most progressive items that

only appease the far left of their base—into their latest package. And all of President Biden's progressive programs cost money, lots and lots of money. And they are going to pay for them with your taxpayer dollars, not the government dollars—taxpayer dollars.

A lot of my colleagues have expressed concern with the Democrats' tax-and-spend spree, but they aren't the only ones sounding the alarm. Folks back home have started to take notice, and there is a lot more collective wisdom among the folks back home than there has been here lately in Washington, DC.

So I brought a couple of letters with me today. These are folks from Alabama who wrote to me about their concerns with President Biden's massive spending plan. Here is what James Merrill from Huntsville, AL, wrote to me:

I have been studying this atrocious "Biden American Families Plan" and it is clear that not only is the cost staggering, the implications of all the rules that will go with it will terribly impact all family life and our freedoms to manage our lives. It blatantly makes the middle-class dependent on the government—cradle to grave. A clear path to socialism."

James, you are exactly right.

And Rosa Hill in Birmingham, AL, had this to say:

I have just listened to President Biden . . . and the ideas are ridiculous. [We] should be helping each other, [not] the government . . . [getting] involved.

Ms. HILL makes an important point. Much of this work can and should be done by our neighbors, churches, and people in the communities. The problem is, we have been conditioned to wait for the government to do the hard work of helping the less fortunate for us rather than doing it ourselves.

Half a century ago, President Lyndon Johnson launched the "War on Poverty." He and leading liberals at the time thought the answer to poverty was to dramatically increase the benefits the Federal Government would give out to the poor. Well, the War on Poverty didn't work like its backers thought it would. The following decade was filled with economic stagnation, high inflation, gas lines, spikes in drug addiction, and a horrifying rise in crimes across our country. Sounds familiar—doesn't it?—just like what is happening today.

Folks, the definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over again expecting a different result. We have already tried this. President Biden is determined to try the same worn out policies today: throwing trillions and trillions of taxpayer money at the problem and hoping the problem goes away. It has been and still is the wrong solution.

President Biden's reckless spending spree won't help struggling American families. It will trap them in the endless cycle of dependence on Big Government and taxpayer money. Just take a look at what President Biden has proposed in his American Families Plan:

government-subsidized childcare, free preschool, free community college. Free, free, free; that seems to be the slogan of this administration.

Of course, we all know that there is no such thing as free in this country. I have talked before about the fact that President Biden has proposed 30—you heard me right, 30—new taxes that the Democrats can choose from to pay for these free programs in their next spending package—30 new taxes during a pandemic.

According to one analysis by the Hoover Institution, President Biden's American Families Plan would add 21 million Americans to the Federal Government's list of beneficiaries—21—21 million more people living off the government. Now, there are certainly people out there who need help. We all know that. But this plan opens the floodgates to taxpayer-funded benefits instead of concentrating on those who mostly need it. Under President Biden's plan, your family could make up to \$200,000 and still qualify for Federal healthcare—\$200,000.

We don't have to comb through the history books for examples on how these progressive policies fail. We don't have to look far. Just look at what we have done here recently and the insistence on keeping unemployment benefits historically high.

My Republican colleagues and I have spoken about how these misguided benefits essentially paid people not to work, destroying small businesses all over the country, and our economy's progress has gone down as we try to recover from this pandemic.

Republican Governors across the country recognized the problem and decided to cut out the overly generous benefits months ago. Folks who needed help would get it, but they wouldn't be paid to sit at home, and then they wouldn't be sitting home when they could have been working at jobs that would help their family. Just about every Democratic Governor has insisted on keeping these benefits. Now, what does that tell you, insisting on keeping the benefits and not keeping the benefits?

We have made some terrible decisions just in a short period of time. Well, we can already see the results of what is happening with these benefits. According to the monthly data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, States that cut the Federal expanded benefit are closer to returning to prepandemic employment levels than the States that kept them. Thirteen of the top 15 States with the best unemployment numbers have all ended their Federal expanded unemployment insurance.

Why don't we learn from this misguided policy and not repeat it by spending money on bad outcomes? We seem to continue to do that every time we turn around.

The reckless tax-and-spend spree to advance President Biden's progressive agenda isn't just unaffordable; it is un-American. The United States was

founded on the ideas of personal liberty and self-reliance. It makes you feel good about yourself earning your own way, not government handouts best known as socialism.

Since our founding, people have flocked to the United States because of the opportunity it gives citizens to succeed, not because of cushy government handouts. Our society valued and values hard work, grit, and determination more than the countries most of these folks have left behind.

Again, this country owes you one thing and that is an opportunity to succeed through education and hard work. Democrats want you to believe that you can only succeed with the government's help. Republicans believe in self-reliance and that you have within you God-given skills and potential to work hard and succeed. You have that. That is what this country gives you, which is why President Biden's reckless spending spree and expansion of government programs is so, so disappointing.

The President and Democrats think success is measured by how much taxpayer money the government can spend, but real success is measured by how many people no longer need the help in the first place. Our efforts need to empower people to be free to live and work to build a better life for themselves and their families. The most successful anti-poverty program should eventually put itself out of business.

So I say, enough. Enough of continuously growing the Federal Government. Enough of the reckless taxpayer-funded spending sprees. Enough of trapping people in a cycle of dependence, because a culture of dependency is a culture in decline.

I say we work together to encourage people to seize the many opportunities in our country, not have them wait around hoping the government will fix every problem life throws their way. We can't do that. It is long past time we get back to teaching folks to fish, to learn to fish themselves, to be self-reliant. That is a culture of hard work and resilience. That is a culture of the United States of America, the best country on the face of the Earth.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CHINA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, this has already been a big week in Tokyo for Team USA, and I hope all of my colleagues have the opportunity to watch a few minutes of the Olympic Games over the next few weeks.

Every year, we hear so much from commentators and athletes about how

the Games are an opportunity for the world to come together, and that is exactly how it once was. Unfortunately, the Olympics are also a target-rich environment for people and regimes that want to use these rare moments of unity to trick the world into ignoring evil.

Before we were able to enjoy any of this year's double-pike vaults or 400-meter freestyle swims, we were already worrying about the impending havoc casting a shadow over the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Late last year, the Chinese Government began pilot testing a new digital currency that will inevitably knock other domestic mobile payment systems out of the marketplace.

The digital yuan trial has already pulled in \$5.3 billion—that is correct, \$5.3 billion—in transactions, and this month we learned that cross-border payments are also on the table. In fact, the trial has been so successful that Beijing wants to expand testing at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Now, as much as I would like to believe that this is an innocent effort to bring the world a little closer together, this is the Chinese Communist Party that we are talking about, and we shouldn't expect good faith because that is not what we are going to get from the CCP. We have reason to believe that the Chinese Government intends to use the digital yuan to conduct a massive surveillance operation on Chinese citizens and foreign visitors.

It wouldn't be the first time something like this happened. The CCP has an unfortunate history of weaponizing emerging technologies against people they would like to control. They used it against the Uighurs, against freedom fighters in Hong Kong, and on the mainland against anyone who questions their party propaganda.

They are already using digital payment platforms to spy on their own people; and if we are not careful, they are going to use them to spy on Team USA.

This month, I sent a letter to the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee asking them to forbid our athletes from accepting or using the digital yuan while competing in Beijing.

The threats are changing, and far too often we see our allies and partners and even our own government ignoring those threats to preserve the status quo.

You may be asking yourself: Why is so much of the world willing to look the other way when confronted with genocide in Xinjiang or murdered protesters in Hong Kong?

It is because speaking up can be dangerous, especially when it comes to challenging the CCP.

China boasts the most in-demand market in the world. In fact, it is such a gold mine that you will recall the NBA ignored large-scale child abuse at its training camps in China just to maintain access to broadcast advertising and merchandise revenue.

Through the Belt and Road Initiative, the Chinese Communist Party has sunk its teeth into some of the most valuable tourist destinations on the face of the Earth, on trade route, and strategic outposts.

They have sold this program as an economic development initiative, but in reality this debt-trap diplomacy is really just an extortion scheme. Once these countries fall into the trap, it is almost impossible to escape.

Even before the pandemic forced the United States into lockdown, I and several other of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle were ringing alarm bells about our supply chain security. China is the most dominant global source of rare Earth minerals, technology infrastructure, and many active pharmaceutical ingredients.

Long story short, there is a lot on the line for the people of the United States. The cards are stacked against us.

It would be really easy to protect that valuable status quo by ignoring human rights violations and extortion schemes and other overt attempts to make the world a little less free. But as much as we would like it to be, freedom is not humanity's natural state. It is fragile. It falls victim to the weak and the power hungry alike, and, if we are not careful, yes, it will slip away, like it has in so many other countries.

Freedom does have to be fought for, and we need our leaders to set the example. That means staying focused on not following the example of countries that have given up their freedom. We don't want to live out the authoritarian nightmare that the CCP has created, but we also want to avoid becoming like nations that have already pawned their futures in pursuit of some grand socialist future.

I fear that our new majority has already lost touch with what the American people actually want. They sure don't want what the Biden administration has been selling lately. I can definitely tell you that after a weekend in Tennessee. They don't feel taken care of. What they are feeling is that they are being manipulated.

They want to know why President Biden and the Democratic majority keep trying to pawn off the freedom that makes us an example to the rest of the world in exchange for more government control that nobody asked for.

I would encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to remember that the American people entrusted them with the power that they are wasting on these radical wish lists items, and that power can be taken away just as easily as it was given.

The American people want to make certain that we do as Ronald Reagan implored us to remember. And, Madam President, as you know, last week I had that poster here on the floor. Freedom is always one generation away from extinction. It is our responsibility to fight for it, to pass it on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 257.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gwynne A. Wilcox, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2023.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 257, Gwynne A. Wilcox, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2023.

Charles E. Schumer, Tammy Baldwin, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Tina Smith, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Cory A. Booker, Mark R. Warner, Brian Schatz, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Raphael Warnock, Michael F. Bennet, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 258.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 258, David M. Prouty, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2026.

Charles E. Schumer, Tammy Baldwin, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Tina Smith, Jacky Rosen, Christopher Murphy, Cory A. Booker, Mark R. Warner, Brian Schatz, Sherrod Brown, Sheldon Whitehouse, Raphael Warnock, Michael F. Bennet, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, July 26, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 122, Todd Sunhwa Kim, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto, Jeff Merkley, Patty Murray, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Gary C. Peters, Angus S. King, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher Murphy, Ben Ray Lujan, Jack Reed, Chris Van Hollen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Todd Sunhwa Kim, of the District

of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Grassley	Padilla
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Brown	Hirono	Sanders
Cantwell	Kaine	Schatz
Capito	Kelly	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Collins	Leahy	Smith
Coons	Lujan	Stabenow
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murkowski	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden

NAYS—40

Barrasso	Hoeben	Rubio
Blackburn	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Boozman	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Braun	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Burr	Lankford	Shelby
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Tuberville
Ernst	Paul	Wicker
Fischer	Portman	Young
Hagerty	Risch	
Hawley	Romney	

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Crapo	Murray
Cardin	Inhofe	Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 40.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nomination: Calendar No. 165.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination Frank Kendall III, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of the Air Force.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be

considered made and laid upon the table, all without intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kendall nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS OF HELAINE ANN GREENFELD AND CHRISTOPHER H. SCHROEDER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request relating to the nomination of Helaine Ann Greenfeld, to be an Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice, PN459, and Christopher H. Schroeder, to be an Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice, PN370.

Last week, at the Senate Judiciary Committee's executive business meeting, I noted my intent to vote for both nominees but object to any unanimous consent request for their confirmation. Ms. Greenfeld will lead the Justice Department's Office of Legislative Affairs and Mr. Schroeder will lead the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. Both of these components are at the heart of my congressional oversight requests and the Department's failure to respond. I have made this decision clearly not on the basis of their credentials but on the basis of the Justice Department's failure to respond to congressional oversight requests.

To date, the Justice Department has failed to provide a full and complete response to any of my oversight requests. I said the same thing when I objected to any unanimous consent request relating to the Kenneth Polite nomination on June 22, 2021. Nothing has changed.

For example, on July 15, 2021, my staff had yet another call with the Justice Department's Office of Legislative Affairs, the very office Ms. Greenfeld will be in charge of. On that call, the Department wanted to know why I had a hold on Mr. Polite and whether they could do anything to change my mind. My staff made clear to the Department that the issues before them are quite

simple: Attorney General Garland must respond to my oversight letters and records requests.

The Department asked for that call with my staff, and the Department did not provide my staff a substantive update on any of my oversight requests. It is absurd for the Department to schedule a call relating to my hold on Mr. Polite, which was done due to the Department's consistent failure to respond to my oversight requests, and then have no updates relating to any of my oversight requests.

As one of many examples of unanswered questions and requests, on February 3, 2021, and March 9, 2021, Senator JOHNSON and I requested information from the Justice Department relating to Nicholas McQuaid. Mr. McQuaid was Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, the position Mr. Polite now holds. In those letters, we raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest in light of the fact that Mr. McQuaid was employed at Latham & Watkins until January 20, 2021, and worked with Christopher Clark, whom Hunter Biden reportedly hired to work on his Federal criminal case.

This arrangement presents an ongoing potential conflict of interest given the fact Mr. McQuaid is still employed at the Criminal Division as the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General. A core function of congressional oversight is to ensure that governmental departments and agencies are free of conflicts of interest. That is especially so with the Justice Department and FBI. If conflicts infect them, those investigations and prosecutions—the very purpose of the Department's existence—could be undermined.

As a part of my oversight, I have requested a recusal memo for Mr. McQuaid. I have also requested to know, as a threshold issue, whether one even exists.

Attorney General Garland has failed to answer and provide the requested records. I have noted to the Department that in 2016, I received from the Department Andrew McCabe's recusal memo to illustrate precedent exists for such a production to Congress. Still, the Justice Department refuses to provide the same for Mr. McQuaid.

On the July 15, 2021, call with my staff, they again raised my questions about Mr. McQuaid. The Department was unable to provide any legitimate basis upon which it could not answer my questions and again failed to provide any update on the Department's response.

As I have noted before with respect to the Federal Government's failure to respond to legitimate congressional oversight requests, there is nothing more eroding of public faith than an unresponsive executive branch that believes it only answers to the President and not the U.S. Congress and, perhaps most importantly, "We the People."

This administration's continued, ongoing, and blatant lack of cooperation has again forced my hand.

Thus, unfortunately, I must object to any consideration of these nominees. My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Ms. Greenfeld and Mr. Schroeder in any way. The executive branch must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE'S COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the installation of a historical marker in the Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church yard on August 1, 2021, that will memorialize the life and death of three citizens who were lynched in 1908. This month, my constituent, Ms. Joyce Salter Johnson, will travel with friends and family from Wisconsin to Mississippi to honor her relative Frank Johnson, as one of those three men who were violently murdered in Hickory, MS.

This historical marker is part of the important work being done by the Equal Justice Initiative in honoring and memorializing lives lost to racial violence in this country through its Community Remembrance Project. With its mission to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, challenge racial and economic injustice, and protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable, the Equal Justice Initiative has been working to expose the truth, advocate for change, and create hope for historically marginalized communities. Lawyer and author Bryan Stevenson founded Equal Justice Initiative in 1989, and since then, it has grown to an organization of robust projects, hands-on education, and publically accessible museums and memorials. In April of 2018, following in the footsteps of the late Dr. James Cameron of Milwaukee's Black Holocaust Museum in my home State of Wisconsin, the Equal Justice Initiative—EJI—opened America's first national memorial dedicated to victims of racial terror lynching and a new museum dedicated to slavery and its legacy was opened in Montgomery, AL.

EJI's Community Remembrance Project partners with community coalitions to do extensive research of documented victims of racial violence. EJI fosters critical conversations about our history and race and justice today. The Community Remembrance Project memorializes documented victims of racial violence and its Community Soil Collection Project gathers soil at lynching sites for display in powerful exhibits honoring these victims. Narrative historical markers are erected in public locations where violence took place.

My constituent, Wisconsin resident Joyce Salter Johnson, is a historian whose third book provides a well-researched history of the Freedmen Settlement of Good Hope, MS, where she

lived until the age of 10. Thus, prior to EJI's documentation, she knew the terrible sequence of events that led to the October 10, 1908, lynching of her relative, Mr. Frank Johnson, and the two others. Given her knowledge, research skills, and inclinations, she was well-suited to take leadership among the coalition members working on the Community Remembrance Project for these men, and for that, I am thankful.

I commend the work of the Equal Justice Initiative and all who help further the Community Remembrance Project's mission of confronting the legacy of slavery, lynching, and segregation and charting a better future. And I extend my solidarity to Ms. Johnson and her family and friends on their personal journey of remembrance and memorial.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BIRD DOGS COFFEE

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Bird Dogs Coffee, a family-owned small business in Owenton, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Located in the heart of Owenton, Kasey Craigmyle Towles opened Bird Dogs Coffee in 2015. Kasey, who grew up in Owenton and was the founder and operator of "Kasey's Corner," a successful gift shop, decided to pursue a different business venture that would uplift her hometown and foster a sense of community. When Bird Dogs Coffee opened its door, Kasey and her husband, Randy, were seizing the opportunity to fill a gap in the Owenton market since there was not a coffee shop in town. Together, Kasey and Randy created a welcoming cafe with delicious food, friendly service, and a hospitable atmosphere.

Today, Bird Dogs Coffee has become a local favorite and has consistently received high praise and glowing reviews in local and regional publications for its outstanding service and homemade cuisine. Bird Dogs Coffee welcomes customers from all over northern Kentucky by providing a place for both locals and travelers to catch up over a cup of coffee. Kasey and Randy host a number of events at their coffee shop, including live music and wine and beer tastings. Moreover, Bird Dogs Coffee provides a meeting space for local organizations like the Owenton Rotary Club. Entrepreneurs at heart, Kasey and Randy have continued seeking ways to grow their business while serving their community. They have purchased buildings next to Bird Dogs Coffee's original location and plan to open an event space and expanded gift shop to meet the needs of their hometown.

Like many small business owners, Kasey and Randy are actively involved in their community. Bird Dogs Coffee is a member of the Owen County Chamber of Commerce and is an enthusiastic supporter of the Owen County Tourism Commission. For several years, Bird Dogs Coffee has sponsored Owen County School District sports teams and contributed to multiple fundraisers for local organizations. Additionally, Kasey and Randy regularly donate to Owen County Project Graduation, which provides an alcohol- and drug-free graduation celebration for local high school seniors. With Owen County High being close to their hearts, Kasey and Randy are also actively involved with the Owen County High School Alumni Association.

Bird Dogs Coffee is a remarkable example of how hard work, ingenuity, and discipline can turn a dream into reality. Small businesses like Bird Dogs Coffee form the heart of towns across Kentucky, regularly stepping up to support their communities. Congratulations to Kasey, Randy, and the entire team at Bird Dogs Coffee. I wish Bird Dogs Coffee the best of luck and look forward to watching this small business's continued growth and success in Kentucky. •

REMEMBERING DAVID MERMELSTEIN

• Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of David Mermelstein.

David was born in Kevjazz, Czechoslovakia, on December 21, 1928. In 1944, at just 16 years old, David was sent to the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz until the American liberation of the camp in 1945. He was the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust. David lost everything, including documentation of his family's insurance policy. After 2 years in a displaced persons camp, David came to the United States in 1948. He met his wife, Irene, who is also a Holocaust survivor, in New York. Together, they decided to move to Miami, FL, where they made a lifelong home.

David devoted his life to serving the south Florida Jewish community, assuming leadership roles in many organizations. He was passionate about educating our children about the Holocaust. He founded the Holocaust Survivors of Miami-Dade County, becoming a national advocate for survivors and testifying before Congress on their behalf on the need for restitution to obtain the most equitable compensation possible for the survivors.

David lived through unspeakable horror and dedicated his life to educating and inspiring those around him. Our memory of all those who suffered must never weaken, and we must always fight against hate.

David was beloved by all who knew him. He was a fierce advocate and an inspiration to all who heard his story. David exemplified what it means to

love and to make a difference. He will be greatly missed and remembered forever for his remarkable and inspiring life.

Ann and I are praying for Irene, Helene, Joe Davis, Michael and Lisa Mermelstein, Debbi Mermelstein, Jenna and Mike Fox, Lindsay Davis, Brian Davis, and Eli Fox, and all of David's family and friends. We mourn this very heavy loss, but we are blessed to have known David Mermelstein and for the work he did to educate and improve the world. May his memory be a blessing to all.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-37. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to pass the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 215

Whereas, the National Institutes of Health has reported that the obesity epidemic is now the second-leading cause of death in the United States, with an estimated three hundred thousand deaths per year nationally attributed to the epidemic; and

Whereas, obesity increases the risk for chronic diseases and conditions including high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, arthritis, mental illness, lipid disorders, sleep apnea, and type two diabetes; and

Whereas, over thirty-four percent of rural Americans live with obesity while just under twenty-nine percent of Americans who reside in metropolitan areas live with the condition; and

Whereas, racial and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately impacted by this epidemic with the highest prevalence of obesity occurring among non-Hispanic blacks (forty-nine and six-tenths percent) followed by Hispanics (forty-four and eight-tenths percent), non-Hispanic whites (forty-two and two-tenths percent), and non-Hispanic Asian adults (seventeen and four-tenths percent); and

Whereas, currently, over one trillion four hundred billion dollars are expended annually on direct and indirect costs for treating health conditions related to obesity; and

Whereas, on average, measured in 2019 dollars, the annual cost of health care for a Medicare beneficiary with obesity is two

thousand eighteen dollars more than the annual cost of health care for a beneficiary of healthy weight; and

Whereas, the overall improvement in public health resulting from coverage for obesity treatments would lead to lower expenditures in emergency room care, ambulatory care, inpatient stays, and prescriptions and is estimated to achieve net savings in healthcare costs of approximately seven thousand dollars per person over ten years; and

Whereas, utilization of obesity treatments are predicted to generate Medicare budget savings of between eighteen billion dollars and twenty-three billion dollars over ten years; and

Whereas, less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries with obesity are able to access obesity care; and

Whereas, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021 (TROA) has been introduced as H.R. 1577 and S. 596 in the One Hundred Seventeenth United States Congress; and

Whereas, this legislation is a real opportunity to help adults living with obesity by making targeted therapies and medications more widely available through Medicare; and

Whereas, the Medicare coverage changes proposed by TROA would decrease federal government spending by approximately twenty-five million dollars over the fiscal year 2020 through 2029 budget period; and

Whereas, with cosponsors representing both the Democratic and Republican Parties, TROA enjoys bipartisan support in both the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and Senator Bill Cassidy and Representative Garret Graves of Louisiana are among the cosponsors of this legislation; and

Whereas, organizations that have endorsed TROA include the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of PAs, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, American Council on Excellence, American Gastroenterological Association, American Medical Group Association, American Psychological Association, American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Black Woman's Health Imperative, Eisai, Endocrine Society, Global Liver Institute, Healthcare Leadership Council, MedTech Coalition for Metabolic Health, National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, Novo Nordisk, Obesity Action Coalition, Obesity Medicine Association, Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity Alliance, The Obesity Society, Trust for America's Health, WW International, and YMCA of the USA; Therefore, be it *Resolved*, that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to pass the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-38. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing its opposition to disproportionately increasing the tax burden on natural gas, oil and fuel industries; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Whereas, the natural gas, oil, and fuel industries contribute significantly to jobs in Louisiana communities and to the development of state of the art emissions reduction technologies; and

Whereas, these industries support nearly eleven million jobs across the country, power the nation's economy, and generate billions in revenue for federal and state governments in rents, royalties, and corporate and income tax payments, including fourteen billion dollars for state treasuries through severance taxes in 2019 alone; and

Whereas, these industries support more than 249,800 jobs in Louisiana and account for more than fourteen and a half billion dollars in wages in the state; and

Whereas, these industries contribute seventy-three billion dollars in gross domestic product for the state; and

Whereas, these industries contributed four and a half billion dollars in direct revenues for Louisiana in 2019, and Louisiana relies on those revenues to fund schools, infrastructure, and other critical social services; and

Whereas, direct industry jobs pay seven times the federal minimum wage and seventy percent higher than the national average wage; and

Whereas, every direct job in natural gas, oil, and fuel industries support an additional 2.7 jobs in affiliated industries, from lodging to restaurants in proximity to these industries' operations; and

Whereas, these industries' investments in this country have led to a fifteen percent decrease in household energy costs over the last decade, while costs for food, education, and healthcare have skyrocketed; and

Whereas, those cheaper energy costs are crucial to working families in our communities and across the country; and

Whereas, the natural gas, oil, and fuel industries should not be prevented from recovering costs that other industries are eligible for simply because they operate in a different economic sector; and

Whereas, the United States tax code allows industries across the manufacturing sector to recover costs related to job creation and other operational investments; and

Whereas, these common tax mechanisms allow natural gas, oil, and fuel industries to create jobs and offset the intangible costs of drilling; invest in our communities; fund critical education, infrastructure, and social service programs; and deliver the energy that working families rely on every day; and therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its opposition to singling out these natural gas, oil, and fuels industries by disproportionately increasing the tax burden on them and the constituents of this state; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the United States, each member of the president's cabinet, each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation, and to the members of the capitol press corps.

POM-39. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of West Virginia urging the United States Congress to extend federal tax incentives to participants in Jumpstart Savings programs that are similar to those that are currently provided to participants in College Savings plans; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Whereas, The economy of the United States is experiencing increased demands for highly trained, skilled tradespeople to fill jobs in the construction, welding, and other vocational sectors; and

Whereas, In the United States, there are nearly half a million more jobs available in the skilled trades than workers with the skills to fill them; and

Whereas, The number of available jobs in the skilled trades is anticipated to rise to two million over the next decade; and

Whereas, A traditional college education is one path to success, but not the only path, especially in light of the increasing costs of a traditional four-year college degree and the growing demand for skilled labor; and

Whereas, Encouraging students and their families to invest in alternative forms of postsecondary skills could help reshape our nation's future workforce; and

Whereas, Providing the next generation the ability to save money for the future costs of tools, equipment, and business expenses will make it easier to enter a vocation, trade, or start a small business in the skilled trades industry; and

Whereas, The West Virginia Legislature has adopted legislation authorizing the West Virginia Jumpstart Savings Program, which creates several tax incentives to help program participants save money, by allowing an income tax deduction for contributions to a Jumpstart Savings account, by providing businesses with a non-refundable state tax credit for matching an employee's own contribution to his or her account each year; and

Whereas, The Jumpstart Savings Program will allow individuals to roll 529 College Savings plan funds over to a Jumpstart Savings account without facing state income tax penalties; and

Whereas, West Virginia's Jumpstart Savings Program could be a model for other states to invest in the future entrepreneurship and small business trade industries in our nation, and Congress should extend federal tax benefits to such programs; Therefore be it *Resolved by the Legislature of West Virginia*:

That Congress is urged to provide tax benefits to participants in Jumpstart Savings programs that are similar to those currently provided to participants in College Savings plans pursuant to 26 U.S.C. §529; and be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution, along with a copy of the Jumpstart Savings Act, to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to members of West Virginia's congressional delegation.

POM-40. A resolution adopted by the Senate of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to enact the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA); to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 245

Whereas, the National Institutes of Health has reported that obesity is now the second leading cause of death nationally, with an estimated three hundred thousand deaths a year attributed to the epidemic; and

Whereas, obesity increases the risk for chronic diseases and conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, arthritis, mental illness, lipid disorders, sleep apnea, and type 2 diabetes; and

Whereas, 34.2% of rural Americans live with obesity compared to 28.7% of those who live in metropolitan areas; and

Whereas, racial and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately impacted, with the highest prevalence of obesity among non-Hispanic blacks (49.6%), followed by Hispanics (44.8%) and non-Hispanic whites (42.2%), and non-Hispanic Asian adults (17.4%); and

Whereas, currently, \$1.42 trillion is spent each year on direct and indirect costs for health conditions related to obesity; and

Whereas, on average in 2019, a Medicare beneficiary with obesity cost two thousand eighteen dollars more than a healthy-weight beneficiary; and

Whereas, overall improvement in health conditions from covered obesity treatments would lead to lower expenditures in emergency room care, ambulatory care, inpatient stays, and prescriptions, resulting in net savings between six thousand seven hundred dollars and seven thousand one hundred dollars over ten years per person; and

Whereas, utilization of obesity treatments will generate Medicare budget savings between eighteen and twenty-three billion dollars over ten years; and

Whereas, less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries with obesity are able to access obesity care; and

Whereas, the proposed Medicare coverage changes would decrease federal government spending by approximately twenty-five million dollars over the fiscal years 2020-2029 budget window; and

Whereas, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) authored by Louisiana United States Senator BILL CASSIDY is a real opportunity to help adults living with obesity by making targeted therapies and medications more widely available through Medicare; and Whereas, the TROA legislation enjoys bipartisan support, being co-sponsored by five Republicans in the United States Senate and five Democrats in the United States Senate; and

Whereas, the following organizations have endorsed TROA: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of PAs, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, American Council on Excellence, American Gastroenterological Association, American Medical Group Association, American Psychological Association, American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery, Black Woman's Health Imperative, Eisai, Endocrine Society, Global Liver Institute, Healthcare Leadership Council, MedTech Coalition for Metabolic Health, National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, Novo Nordisk, Obesity Action Coalition, Obesity Medicine Association, SECA, Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance, The Obesity Society, Trust for America's Health, WW International, and YMCA of the USA; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA); and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate, the clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-41. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the ABLE Age Adjustment Act; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 99

Whereas, the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act, also known as the ABLE Act, was passed by Congress and subsequently signed into law in 2014; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act has created tax-advantaged savings accounts known as "ABLE accounts" for persons with disabilities and has allowed funds to be withdrawn from the accounts to cover costs of health care, employment support, housing, transportation, assistive technology, and lifelong education for those persons; and

Whereas, ABLE accounts are subject to the same tax treatment as the popular education savings accounts commonly called "529 plans"; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act has created a powerful incentive for individuals and families to save private funds for the purpose of supporting persons with disabilities in maintaining health, independence, and quality of life; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act, as enacted, stipulates that funds held in an ABLE account do not count toward any maximum limit on a person's assets upon which eligibility for a means-tested federal program may be contingent; and

Whereas, savings in an ABLE account do not jeopardize a person's eligibility for programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income; and

Whereas, the asset limits of such programs had previously forced low-income persons into the difficult decision of whether to spend their limited resources, down to two thousand dollars in most cases, in order to become eligible for needed assistance; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act, as enacted, includes a fiscal safeguard for states by providing that if the ABLE account beneficiary dies or his disability ceases and assets remain in the account, the assets will first be distributed to any state Medicaid plan that provided assistance to the person; and

Whereas, as evidenced by the party affiliations of its seventy-eight original cosponsors being almost perfectly balanced, the ABLE Act legislation enjoys broad bipartisan support; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act embodies sound economic policy by encouraging savings and asset building; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act promotes important values that our nation holds dear by providing that every citizen living with a disability has the opportunity to attain independence and an improved quality of life; and

Whereas, prior to its passing, a limitation was added to the ABLE Act, which limits the benefits to persons who had the onset of disability before the age of twenty-six; and

Whereas, this age limitation has prevented many persons and families from receiving the many benefits of the ABLE Act; and

Whereas, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act has been introduced as S. 331 and H.R. 1219 in the One Hundred Seventeenth United States Congress; and

Whereas, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would make the provisions of the ABLE Act available to persons who had the onset of disability before the age of forty-six; and

Whereas, if passed, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would make six million more persons with disabilities eligible for ABLE accounts; and

Whereas, if passed, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would also help states keep administrative costs for the state ABLE programs low; and

Whereas, as evidenced by the party affiliations of its sixty-five cosponsors, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act has broad bipartisan support; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the ABLE Age Adjustment Act; be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-42. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to support H.R. 82 of the 117th Congress, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021, and all other

similar legislation and to take such actions as are necessary to review and eliminate all provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving pension benefits from federal, state, or local government retirement or pension systems, plans, or funds; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

Whereas, the Congress of the United States of America has enacted both the Government Pension Offset (GPO), reducing the spousal and survivor Social Security benefit, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), reducing the earned Social Security benefits payable to any person who also receives a public pension benefit; and

Whereas, the GPO negatively affects a spouse or survivor receiving a federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit who would also be entitled to a Social Security benefit earned by a spouse; and

Whereas, the GPO formula reduces the spousal or survivor Social Security benefit by two-thirds of the amount of the federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit received by the spouse or survivor, in many cases completely eliminating the Social Security benefit even though their spouses paid Social Security taxes for many years; and

Whereas, the GPO has a harsh effect on hundreds of thousands of citizens and undermines the original purpose of the Social Security dependent/survivor benefit; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than half a million individuals nationally are affected by the GPO; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to those persons who have earned federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefits, in addition to working in employment covered under Social Security and paying into the Social Security system; and

Whereas, the WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefit using an averaged indexed monthly earnings formula and may reduce Social Security benefits for affected persons by as much as one-half of the retirement benefit earned as a public servant in employment not covered under Social Security; and

Whereas, the WEP causes hardworking individuals to lose a significant portion of the Social Security benefits that they earn themselves; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than one and a half million individuals nationally are affected by the WEP; and

Whereas, in certain circumstances, both the WEP and the GPO can be applied to a qualifying survivor's benefit, each independently reducing the available benefit and in combination eliminating a large portion of the total Social Security benefit available to the survivor; and

Whereas, because of the calculation characteristics of the GPO and the WEP, they have a disproportionately negative effect on employees working in lower-wage government jobs, like policemen, firefighters, teachers, and state employees; and

Whereas, Louisiana is making every effort to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to encourage them to live here lifelong, yet the current GPO and WEP provisions compromise their quality of life; and

Whereas, the number of people affected by GPO and WEP is growing every day as more and more people reach retirement age; and

Whereas, individuals drastically affected by the GPO or WEP may have no choice but to return to work after retirement in order to make ends meet, but the earnings accumulated during this return to work can further reduce the Social Security benefits the individual is entitled to; and

Whereas, the GPO and WEP are established in federal law, and repeal of the GPO and the WEP can only be enacted by congress: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take all such actions as are necessary to review the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision Social Security benefit reductions and to eliminate or reduce them by supporting H.R. 82 of the 117th Congress, the Social Security Fairness Act and all similar purposed legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation and the president of the United States.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 517. A bill to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-31).

S. 1917. A bill to establish a K-12 education cybersecurity initiative, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-32).

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Ms. STABENOW for the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

*Jennifer Lester Moffitt, of California, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. TOOMEY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 2466. A bill to reform the Federal sugar program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 2467. A bill to provide for a Public Health Emergency Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 2468. A bill to amend the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 to extend the moratorium on drilling off the coasts of the States of Florida, Georgia, and South Caro-

lina, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 2469. A bill establishing appropriate thresholds for certain budget points of order in the Senate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 2470. A bill to prohibit Federal funding for educational agencies and schools whose students do not read certain foundational texts of the United States and are not able to recite those texts or that teach that those texts are products of white supremacy or racism; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2471. A bill to establish a community disaster assistance fund for housing and community development and to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide, from the fund, assistance through a community development block grant disaster recovery program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2472. A bill to prohibit the non-consensual release of claims by States, municipalities, federally recognized Tribes, or the United States against non-debtors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. 2473. A bill to provide grants for the construction, improvement, and acquisition of middle mile infrastructure; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2474. A bill to prohibit the use of funds made available under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to purchase communications equipment or services that pose a national security risk; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. Res. 318. A resolution expressing support for the designation of July 2021 as "American Grown Flower and Foliage Month"; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. Res. 319. A resolution expressing support for the designation of July 2021 as "National Sarcoma Awareness Month"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 320. A resolution authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Senate Chamber; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 67

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 67, a bill to support efforts by

international financial institutions to provide a robust global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

S. 586

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 586, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to combat the opioid crisis by promoting access to non-opioid treatments in the hospital outpatient setting.

S. 805

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 805, a bill to repeal the wage requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act.

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 812, a bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes.

S. 1901

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1901, a bill to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian Tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 1988

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1988, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect access to telehealth services under the Medicare program.

S. 2083

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2083, a bill to waive the requirement to undergo a medical exam for aliens who are otherwise eligible for special immigrant status under the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, and for other purposes.

S. 2102

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2102, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide mammography screening for veterans who served in locations associated with toxic exposure.

S. 2160

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2160, a bill to prohibit the Administrator of General Services from

establishing per diem reimbursements rates for travel within the continental United States (commonly known as "CONUS") for certain fiscal years below a certain level, and for other purposes.

S. 2288

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2288, a bill to amend the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to provide pay equity for amateur athletes and other personnel, and for other purposes.

S. 2408

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2408, a bill to prohibit the award of Federal funds to an institution of higher education that hosts or is affiliated with a student-based service site that provides abortion drugs or abortions to students of the institution or to employees of the institution or site, and for other purposes.

S. 2412

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2412, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect coverage for screening mammography, and for other purposes.

S. 2463

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2463, a bill to require agencies submit zero-based budgets.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 318—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF JULY 2021 AS "AMERICAN GROWN FLOWER AND FOLIAGE MONTH"

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. RES. 318

Whereas cut flower and foliage growers in the United States are hard-working, dedicated individuals who bring beauty, economic stimulus, and pride to their communities and the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States have a long history of using flowers and foliage grown in the United States to bring beauty to important events and express affection for loved ones;

Whereas consumers spend over \$35,000,000,000 each year on floral products, including cut flowers, garden plants, bedding, and indoor plants;

Whereas, each year, an increasing number of households in the United States purchase fresh cut flowers and foliage from more than 16,000 florists and floral establishments;

Whereas the annual per capita spending on floral products by consumers in the United States is almost \$108;

Whereas the people of the United States increasingly want to support domestically produced foods and agricultural products and would prefer to buy locally grown flowers and foliage whenever possible, yet a majority of domestic consumers do not know where the flowers and foliage they purchase are grown;

Whereas, in response to increased demand, the "Certified American Grown" logo was created in July 2014 in order to educate and empower consumers to purchase flowers and foliage from domestic producers;

Whereas millions of stems of domestically grown flowers and foliage are now "Certified American Grown";

Whereas domestic flower and foliage farmers produce thousands of varieties of flowers and foliage across the United States, such as peonies in Alaska, Gerbera daisies in California, lupines in Maine, tulips in Washington, lilies in Oregon, larkspur in Texas, and leatherleaf in Florida;

Whereas the top flower and foliage varieties with the highest production in the United States are tulips, Gerbera daisies, lilies, gladiolas, roses, and leatherleaf;

Whereas people in every State have access to domestically grown flowers and foliage, yet only 20 percent of flowers and foliage sold in the United States is domestically grown;

Whereas the domestic cut flower and foliage industry—

(1) creates a substantial economic impact daily; and

(2) supports hundreds of growers, thousands of small businesses, and tens of thousands of jobs in the United States;

Whereas most domestic cut flowers and foliage are sold in the United States within 24 to 48 hours after harvest and last longer than flowers shipped longer distances;

Whereas flowers and foliage grown domestically enhance the ability of the people of the United States to festively celebrate weddings and births and honor those who have passed;

Whereas flower and foliage giving has been a holiday tradition in the United States for generations;

Whereas flowers and foliage speak to the beauty of motherhood on Mother's Day and to the spirit of love on Valentine's Day;

Whereas flowers and foliage are an essential part of other holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa;

Whereas flowers and foliage help commemorate the service and sacrifice of members of the Armed Forces on Memorial Day and Veterans Day; and

Whereas the Senate encourages the cultivation of flowers and foliage in the United States by domestic flower and foliage farmers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of July 2021 as "American Grown Flower and Foliage Month";

(2) recognizes that purchasing flowers and foliage grown in the United States supports the farmers, small businesses, jobs, and economy of the United States;

(3) recognizes that growing flowers and foliage in the United States is a vital part of the agricultural industry of the United States;

(4) recognizes that cultivating flowers and foliage domestically enhances the ability of the people of the United States to festively celebrate holidays and special occasions; and

(5) urges all people of the United States to proactively showcase flowers and foliage grown in the United States in order to show support for—

(A) the flower and foliage farmers, processors, and distributors in the United States; and

(B) the agricultural industry of the United States overall.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the American Grown Flower and Foliage Month resolution. This resolution is cosponsored by Senator PADILLA and Senator SULLIVAN, and I want to thank them for joining me in introducing this resolution.

This resolution designates July 2021 as "American Grown Flower and Foliage Month" and recognizes the important contributions of all those involved in the flower and foliage industry make to our Nation, and also notes the long history that flowers have in our Nation and society.

Every year, thousands of households in the United States purchase fresh cut flowers and foliage from more than 16,000 florists and floral establishments. American consumers spend \$35 billion per year on floral products each year.

California is the cut flower capital of the United States, producing nearly 75 percent of American-grown flowers. While the majority of Americans would prefer to buy locally grown flowers, only 20 percent of the flowers sold in the United States are grown domestically.

Flowers are used for all types of occasions. They help us celebrate major life events, and help us to mourn. The flower and foliage industry is also a major employer in the United States. This industry supports hundreds of growers, thousands of small businesses, and tens of thousands of jobs in the United States.

Our resolution encourages consumers to look for the 'Certified American Grown' label to support local farmers this month and throughout the year. If consumers are able to differentiate between American-grown flowers and those that have been imported, many would choose to purchase U.S.-grown flowers and support the U.S. industry.

This resolution is an important way to recognize a major part of the agricultural industry in the United States, and I encourage my colleagues to move to pass this resolution to commemorate this important month as "American Grown Flower and Foliage Month."

Thank you Mr. President. I yield the floor.

SENATE RESOLUTION 319—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF JULY 2021 AS "NATIONAL SARCOMA AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. JOHNSON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 319

Whereas sarcoma is a cancer of connective tissues, such as nerves, muscles, joints, fat, bones, and blood vessels, that can arise anywhere in the body;

Whereas, in the United States—

(1) 16,000 individuals are diagnosed with sarcoma each year;

(2) more than 7,000 individuals die from sarcoma each year; and

(3) 50,000 individuals struggle with sarcoma at any 1 time;

Whereas, each year, 1 percent of cancers diagnosed in adults and 20 percent of cancers diagnosed in children are sarcoma;

Whereas more than 70 subtypes of sarcoma have been identified;

Whereas sarcoma is often misdiagnosed and underreported; and

Whereas July 2021 would be an appropriate month to designate as National Sarcoma Awareness Month—

(1) to raise awareness about sarcoma; and

(2) to encourage more individuals in the United States to get properly diagnosed and treated: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports the designation of July 2021 as "National Sarcoma Awareness Month".

SENATE RESOLUTION 320—AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE SENATE CHAMBER

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 320

Resolved, That rule 13.1 of the United States Senate Chamber and Galleries Regulations (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph the Senate in actual session on Tuesday, July 27, 2021.

SEC. 2. The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate is authorized and directed to make the necessary arrangements therefore, which arrangements shall provide for a minimum of disruption to Senate proceedings.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Christopher H. Schroeder, of North Carolina, to be Assistant Attorney General, dated July 26, 2021.

I, Senator CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Helaine Ann Greenfield, of Maryland, to be Assistant Attorney General, dated July 26, 2021.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, July 26, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE SENATE CHAMBER

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 320, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 320) authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Senate Chamber.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 320) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, July 27; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Kim nomination postcloture; further, that all postcloture time on the Kim nomination expire at 11:30 a.m.; and that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:16 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, OF OHIO, TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2025, VICE WANDA FELTON, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN R. BASS, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MANAGEMENT), VICE BRIAN J. BULATAO.

DAVID L. COHEN, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA.

BARRY GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIP AND
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

JOSEPH M. GREEN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE BARRY GOLDWATER SCHOLARSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING MARCH 3, 2023. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MATTHEW M. GRAVES, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF

COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JESSIE K. LIU, RESIGNED.

EREK L. BARRON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ROBERT K. HUR, RESIGNED.

NICHOLAS W. BROWN, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE BRIAN T. MORAN, RESIGNED.

CLIFFORD D. JOHNSON, OF INDIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, RESIGNED.

ZACHARY A. MYERS, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE JOSHUA J. MINKLER, RESIGNED.

RACHAEL S. ROLLINS, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE ANDREW E. LELLING, RESIGNED.

TRINI E. ROSS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIAM JOSEPH HOCHUL, JR., RESIGNED.

VANESSA WALDREF, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIAM D. HYSLOP, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by
the Senate July 26, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

FRANK KENDALL III, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE.